

STAMFORD LIBRARY RULES AND REGULATION 1906

Stamford Free Library was formally opened on January 25th 1906 by the Lord-Lieutenant of Lincolnshire, Adelbert Brownlow-Cust, 3rd Earl Brownlow; also present on the day were other members of the local aristocracy and their wives, the Mayor, Mr George Higgs; members of the Council, their Officials, and members of the public. Although at first there was some opposition on the Borough Council to a Public Library in the town, the actions of Major Henry Hart swayed its members along with the gift of £2,500 from Mr Andrew Carnegie, the Scottish-American industrialist and philanthropist.

The Library was funded by the Borough Council providing the site, a small addition to the town rates, and by public donations, after which borrowing was free to those on the Borough Burgess Roll. The rules and regulations that established Free Libraries were governed by Acts of Parliament. The most different ones to us here in the 21st century are the punishments laid down in statute, which are repeated in the Rules and Regulations which were drawn up by the town's Library Committee in August 1905.

Which are: -

“Whosoever shall unlawfully and maliciously destroy or damage any Book, Manuscript, Picture, Print, Statue, Bust, or Vase, or any other article or thing kept for the purposes of Art, Science, or Literature, or as an object of Curiosity in any Museum, Gallery, Cabinet, Library, or other repository, which is either at all times or from time to time open for admission of the Public, shall be guilty of a misdemeanour, and being convicted thereof, shall be liable to be imprisoned for any term not exceeding six months, with or without hard labour, and if a male under the age of sixteen years, with or without whipping”

And that:-

“Any person who in any Library or Reading Room to which this Act applies (Libraries Offences Act 1898), to the annoyance or disturbance of any person using the same: -

(1) behaves in a disorderly manner:

(2) uses violent, abusive, or obscene language:

(3) bets or gambles:

or who, after proper warning, persists in remaining therein beyond the hours fixed for the closing of such Library or Reading Room.

“shall be liable on summary conviction to a penalty not exceeding forty shillings.”

Chris Hunt

January 2026

Notes

The opening days of the week and times vary between the Reading Room and the Free Lending Library.

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Borough of Stamford.

PUBLIC LIBRARY.

Reading and Reference Room. Open from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Free.
Lending Library. Open on Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays,
from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., and 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.

The above are open to the Public subject to the Rules and Regulations hereinafter mentioned.

All the Departments are closed on Sundays, Christmas Days, Good Fridays, Bank Holidays, and such other days as the Committee may from time to time determine.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

As to the use of the Library, Reading and Reference Room, and the admission of persons thereto, made by the Free Library Committee, pursuant to "The Public Libraries Acts, 1892 and 1893," and "The Libraries Offences Act, 1898."

1.—The Stamford Public Library is a society established for the purpose of literature and science exclusively. The Librarian shall have the general charge of the Library and shall be responsible for the safe keeping of the books and all other property belonging thereto subject to the direction of the Committee.

2.—The Library is supported in part by a rate levied in accordance with the Public Libraries Act, and in part by voluntary contributions of money and gifts of books and periodicals. The Library Committee shall not make any dividend, gift, division or bonus in money unto or between any of the members.

3.—Admission is free during the hours of opening but no person shall be admitted who is in a state of intoxication, or in a dirty condition, or suffering from any infectious disease, or is in any way disorderly, nor shall any audible conversation be permitted in any of the rooms. No lighting of matches, smoking, spitting, gambling, or profane or indecent language shall be permitted, nor will any person be allowed to partake of refreshments therein, or to sleep in, or on the premises. No person shall wilfully obstruct, disturb, interrupt, or annoy any other person in the proper use of the Library.

4.—Dogs shall not be admitted. Bicycles or other vehicles shall not be brought into any part of the Library Buildings.

5.—No person shall be allowed to pass within the Counters or other enclosure, or take any books from the shelves except by permission of the Librarian.

6.—The Lending Library shall, except as hereinafter mentioned, be open for the issue and receipt of books on Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., and from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. It shall be closed on Sundays, Good Fridays, Christmas Days, Bank Holidays and such other days as the Committee may from time to time appoint.

7.—Books shall be borrowed for home reading only by persons over 14 years of age, who are rated, resident, or employed in the Urban District of Stamford in accordance with Rule No. 8.

8.—Books may be borrowed by persons possessing the qualifications and complying with requirements hereinafter specified, that is to say:—

- (a) Any person enrolled, at the time of application, as a burgess of the Borough of Stamford, upon signing an application for a Borrower's Ticket and giving a written assent to the rules and regulations for the time being in force relating to the Library.
- (b) Any person residing or employed in the said Borough who is over the age of 14 years and who has obtained a guarantee from a person duly qualified by these rules to be a guarantor.
- (c) Any person resident or employed in the Urban District of Stamford, not being a burgess, and over the age of 14 years, who has not been able to obtain such a guarantee as aforesaid, who shall deposit with the Librarian the sum of ten shillings, and shall sign a written assent to the rules and regulations as before mentioned.
- (d) In accordance with section 11 (subsection 3) of the Public Libraries Act, 1892, any person who, not being otherwise qualified, pays an annual subscription of five shillings, but such a borrower must conform in every respect to these rules and regulations, and shall have no privileges other than those enjoyed by borrowers qualified under paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) of this rule.

9.—Any person whose name appears in the current Burgess Roll may become a guarantor. No such person shall be a guarantor for more than three persons at the same time, without the special sanction of the Library Committee, and in no single case shall his or her liability exceed £5 per person guaranteed.

10.—The application and guarantee forms duly signed must be delivered to the Librarian, and, if found in order, the Borrower's Ticket will be issued to the borrower in person after the third day after such delivery as aforesaid. In computing the period of three days, the days on which the Lending Library is,

by these rules and regulations, directed to be closed are to be excluded. If the intending borrower does not, within one calendar month from the third day, apply personally for his Borrower's Ticket, such ticket may be cancelled.

11.—All tickets and vouchers must be renewed biennially, each ticket and voucher being available for two years from the date of issue. When a ticket is granted or renewed, the sum of one penny shall be paid for the same. Borrowers and their guarantors shall be held responsible for all books taken out on their tickets so that care should be taken to have them cancelled and renewed when they expire.

12.—Borrowers must return each volume lent within 14 days including days of issue and return, but may retain the use of such volume for a further period not exceeding 7 days upon payment of one penny. Books must be delivered into the hands of the Librarian or his assistant when returned. Borrowers will be responsible for the books unless so delivered.

13.—Borrowers or their guarantors shall be required to pay the amount of loss or damage done to books while in their possession or to procure new copies or series of equal value, but in the latter case the person supplying the new copy shall be entitled to the damaged copy or series on depositing the new one.

14.—Books cannot be bespoke. The borrower who first applies for a book after its return is entitled to have it issued to him or her. In applying for books it is imperative that the Indicator be consulted first to ascertain if the book be "in" or "out". Red means "in" and Blue means "out."

15.—Borrowers should endeavour to return their books personally, but when this cannot be done conveniently they must employ responsible messengers able to deliver their messages and to take due care of the books. The Librarian has power to exclude messengers whom he may not consider competent.

16.—Borrowers' tickets shall not be transferable, and any ticket allowed to be used by any other person than the borrower named therein shall be forfeited. Lost tickets can be replaced on personal application to the Librarian at a charge of twopence. Borrowers must produce their tickets upon every application for a book. No borrower is at liberty to lend his ticket or to part with the possession of any book obtained from the Library.

17.—A fine of one penny will be incurred for the first week or portion of a week any book is detained beyond the time mentioned in Rule 12, and twopence for each following week or portion thereof, and no other books will be issued until such fines be paid. No fines shall exceed the value of the books borrowed. At the expiration of 28 days from the day of issue, application will be made to the borrower or the guarantor for the return of the book or its value and for the fine incurred.

18.—No borrower shall have more than one book at a time (except in case of consecutive volumes), and any person obtaining two separate works, on one ticket, shall be fined one shilling.

Books cannot be exchanged on the day of issue. No book will be lent to any person owing a fine or fines.

19.—In wet weather borrowers are required to protect their books during their passage to and from the Library, and on all occasions to keep the books clean. Any borrower writing in, marking or otherwise defacing a book belonging to the Library will be suspended from using the Library for such time as the Committee may decide. The earliest opportunity should be taken of reporting damage or injury done to books, otherwise borrowers will be held responsible for any damage noticed when the books are returned.

20.—Any change in the residence of borrowers or their guarantors and any withdrawal of guarantee must be forthwith notified (in writing) to the Librarian.

21.—Borrowers leaving the Urban District, or ceasing to use the Library, are required to have their tickets cancelled by the Librarian, otherwise they and their guarantors will be held responsible for any books taken out on such tickets.

22.—All books must be returned (irrespective of the time allowed for reading) on or before the second Thursday in August in each year, when the Library will be closed for a fortnight for Stock-taking. In default thereof a charge of twopence per day will be incurred for each work detained beyond that day.

23.—The Librarian shall exclude any person who shall neglect or decline to comply with any of the rules and regulations, and he shall not permit any person or persons to remain on the premises who shall wilfully offend against any of the said rules and regulations or be guilty of any disorderly or improper conduct. He may also withhold any book from any person desirous of borrowing the same, but such borrower shall have the right of appeal to the Library Committee, who shall decide all disputes between the borrowers and the Library Officials, and whose decision shall be final.

24.—The Reading Room shall, except as hereinafter mentioned, be open to persons over 14 years of age from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. on every weekday. It shall be closed on Sundays, Good Fridays, Christmas Days, Bank Holidays, and such other days as the Committee may from time to time appoint.

25.—No reader shall be allowed to trace any plate or engraving, and in making extracts special care must be observed that the works are in no way injured. The use of ink is not permitted.

26.—Any newspaper in use, which is wanted by another reader, must be given up within ten minutes to the person giving notice.

27.—Newspapers and Magazines shall not be removed from the stands or tables either in the reading room or reference room on which they are placed by the Librarian or his Assistant.

28.—No person shall write upon, mark, deface, or mutilate any book, newspaper, magazine, or other papers.

29.—The Reading and Reference rooms shall be used solely for reading the papers and magazines provided or for copying or taking notes therefrom.

30.—The Reference Library will be open during the same hours as the Reading room, except that books which are not kept upon open shelves will only be issued during such hours as the Lending Library is open. Persons are expressly forbidden to take out of the Reference Room any books belonging to the Reference Library. Books given over the counter must be returned into the hands of the Librarian or his Assistant when finished with or when required by the Librarian or his Assistant. Books kept on open shelves must be returned to their proper places after perusal. Persons under the age of 14 years will not be allowed to be in the Reference Room, except with the consent of the Library Committee.

31.—All suggestions and complaints must be made to the Librarian or written in a book provided for that purpose.

32.—In case any borrower or other person shall neglect or refuse to pay any costs, expenses, damages, or fines, which he or she has incurred under these rules, they shall be recoverable by process of law against the borrower or his guarantor or both of them jointly, and in such action the Town Clerk of Stamford, on behalf of the Committee of the Stamford Public Library, may be Plaintiff, and the fact of his being entitled to recover as Plaintiff in such action shall be taken to be admitted by the Defendant or Defendants.

33.—No alteration shall be made in the Rules of the Stamford Public Library, except at a General Meeting of the Committee convened for that purpose. Notice of any such alteration or addition will be posted up in the Reading Room.

BY ORDER of the Library Committee of the Borough of Stamford.

CHARLES ATTER,
Clerk

August, 1905.

N.B.—The Committee appeals to the Ratepayers to assist in preserving good order in the rooms, and in protecting the property from injury and theft. Any breach of these rules should be reported at once to the Librarian.

Particular attention is directed to the following extracts from 24 and 25 Vict., Cap. 97; Sections 39 and 61:—

"Whosoever shall unlawfully and maliciously destroy or damage any Book, Manuscript, Picture, Print, Statue, Bust, or Vase, or any other article or thing kept for the purposes of Art, Science, or Literature, or as an object of Curiosity in any Museum, Gallery, Cabinet, Library, or other repository, which is either at all times or from time to time open for the admission of the Public, shall be guilty of a misdemeanour, and being convicted thereof, shall be liable to be imprisoned for any term not exceeding six months, with or without hard labour, and if a male under the age of sixteen years, with or without whipping."

" Any person found committing any offence against this Act, whether the same be punishable upon Indictment or upon summary Conviction, may be immediately apprehended without a warrant by any police officer, or the owner of the property injured, or his servant, or any person authorised by him, and forthwith taken before some neighbouring Justice of the Peace to be dealt with according to law."

Special attention is also directed to the following extract from the Libraries Offences Act, 1898.

" Any person who in any Library or Reading Room to which this Act applies, to the annoyance or disturbance of any person using the same:—

- (1) behaves in a disorderly manner;
- (2) uses violent, abusive or obscene language;
- (3) bets or gambles;
- (4) or who, after proper warning, persists in remaining therein beyond the hours fixed for the closing of such Library or Reading Room,

" shall be liable on summary conviction to a penalty not exceeding forty shillings."

